

KLAAS MULLER

The Flight of Cloelia

According to the history, Cloelia was a Roman virgin, that was captured by the Etruscans. She managed to escape that prison and crossed Tiber-river. She was then sent back by the Romans, mainly out of fear for the Etruscan (notorious) wrath. Porsena, the Etruscan king, was impressed by this lady's courage and fierceness. He therefore rewarded her by giving back her freedom and let her take other hostages and.. a new fabulous looking horse.

There is some ambiguity on Rubens' version of Cloelia. 2 bigger paintings are being considered by Corpus Rubenianum Ludwig Burchard (Elisabeth MC Grath, Part XIII (1) *Subjects from History*, P. 251-257, Afb. 175-176) beschouwd als "Rubens? and Jan Boeckhorst" (Dresden ,Gemäldegalerie) en "Rubens en Jan van den Hoecke (Paris, Louvre).

Quote from MC Garth: (p.253) "It is likely that there was a preliminary sketch by Rubens, as is discussed below, under N° 48a. Still there may have been a Rubensian original, now lost, of wich the Dresden work was more or less a reproduction." and (p.256) "But it seems to me that it must indeed have been designed by Rubens, and then executed by an assistant in the workshop - an artistry of some competence".

This painting in fact shows some remarkable differences in terms of composition and pentimenti. For example, the virgin right below has a different position and posture, the standing virgin on the right doesn't have a loincloth. Romulus en Remus are also omitted on our study. X-rays show in fact some very interesting underpaintings.

oil on panel, 27 x 63cm



Literature

Obra Social de la Caja de Ahorros de Zaragoza, Aragón y Rioja, Museo Camon Aznar 1979, p. 25, cat. no. 3 (as Rubens);

F.O. Baile, Museo Camón Aznar, Zaragoza 1990, p. 26, cat. no. 36 (as Rubens).